



by DOUG MOENCH

and PAUL GULACY

BAT MAN

393
75¢

CAN. 95¢
U.K. 35p
MAR. 86

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE

CAS
AUTHORITY



GULACY



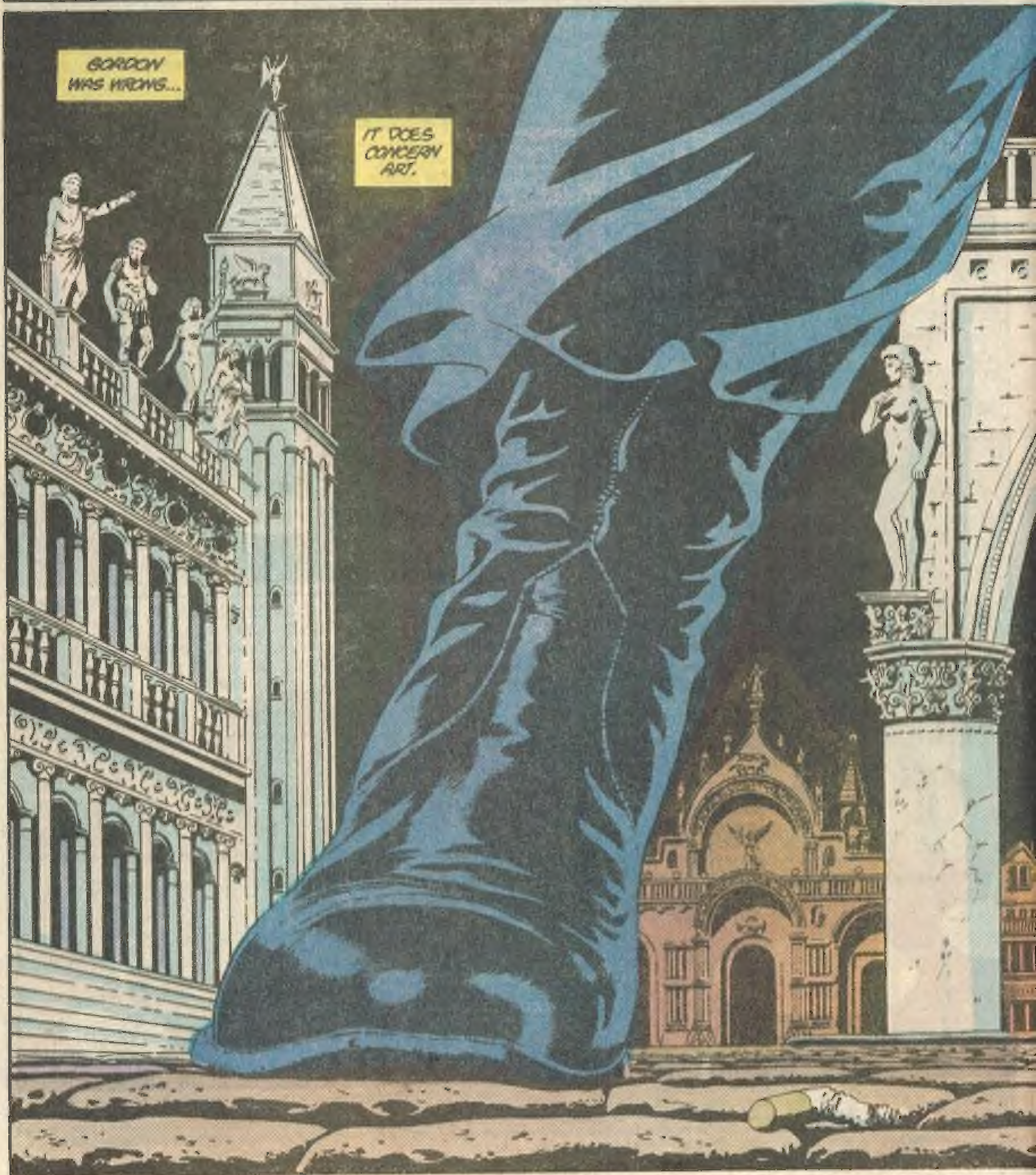


THE DARK RIDER

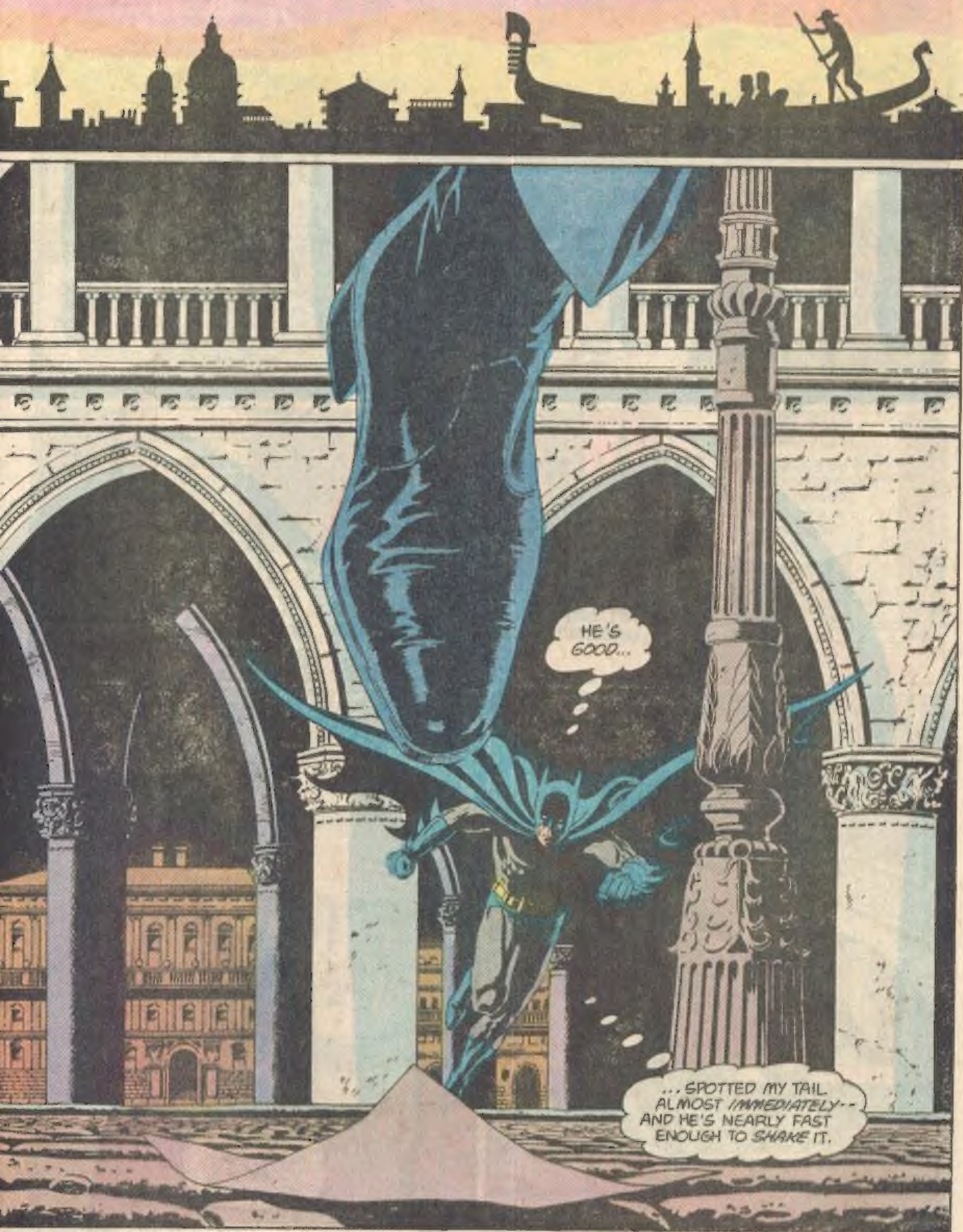


GORDON
WAS WRONG...

IT DOES
CONCERN
ART.



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A TERRORIST, BUT I KNOW ONLY THAT HE IS VERY DESPERATE, VERY DANGEROUS ... AND KNOWN AS "THE DARK RIDER."



LOST MY CHANCE TO SIMPLY FOLLOW HIM TO THE STATUE...



HE'S SMUGGLING SOMETHING OUT OF VENICE TONIGHT-- A STOLEN ART TREASURE-- A STATUE.

WHERE IT IS LOCATED RIGHT NOW, I DO NOT KNOW, BUT AS FOR THE DARK RIDER HIMSELF...



HAVE TO CATCH HIM NOW-- FORCE HIM TO TALK.

...HE HAS BEEN SEEN TAKING DINNER AT THE CAFE ON THE VIA VENETO-- AND IF YOU PICK HIM UP THERE, PERHAPS YOU COULD FOLLOW HIM TO THE STATUE.

ME, I AM SIMPLY AN INFORMER-- WITH NO TASTE FOR SUCH DEATH.



MANY MEN HAVE WEAK STOMACHS, VOORLOPER.



HE'S FINALLY GOING TO GROUND--
INTO THAT WAREHOUSE ON THE CANAL...



GOVE.

BUT THAT
INNER DOOR
JUST
AHEAD...



WAKT

SHINK



WHAT?!

THEN HE DID LEAD
ME TO THE STATUE--?



ALL CRATED
AND READY FOR
TRANSPORT--?

BUT WHY?
DID HE
PANIC OR--



B-BLACK
MARKET...



...AUCTION...

... IN...
B-BONNNNNN...



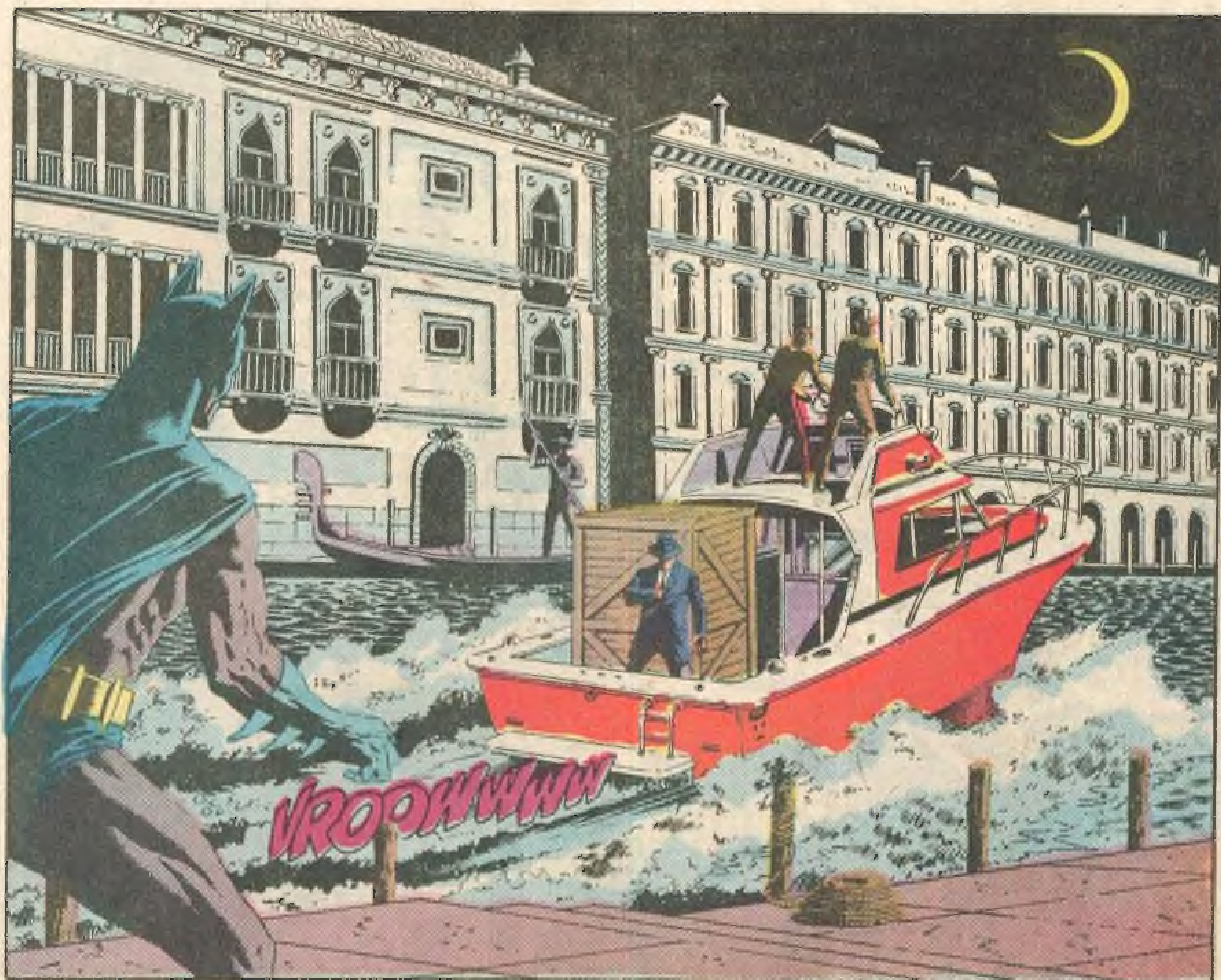
< START THE
BOAT! >

VROOOWWWW



SO MUCH FOR
VOORLOPER'S
BLAND DIET,
BUT--

OUTSIDE!



BOON, WEST GERMANY: THREE DAYS LATER...

TONIGHT?
YOU'RE SURE,
GORDON?

I'LL
FIND
IT.

SO I'M TOLD BY THE
BIG BOYS FROM LANSLEY,
VIRGINIA--TO BE STAGED
IN AN ABANDONED COAL
MINE SEVEN KILOMETERS
SOUTH OF THE CITY,
BETWEEN--



SOLD FOR
TWENTY
THOUSAND.

NOW, BEFORE WE COME
TO THE WORKS BY
FABRESE--

--THE NEXT ITEM FOR
AUCTION IS ONE OF THE
CORNERSTONES OF THIS
COLLECTION OF PRE-
REVOLUTIONARY
RUSSIAN ART.

ALTHOUGH THE SCULPTOR
IS UNKNOWN--

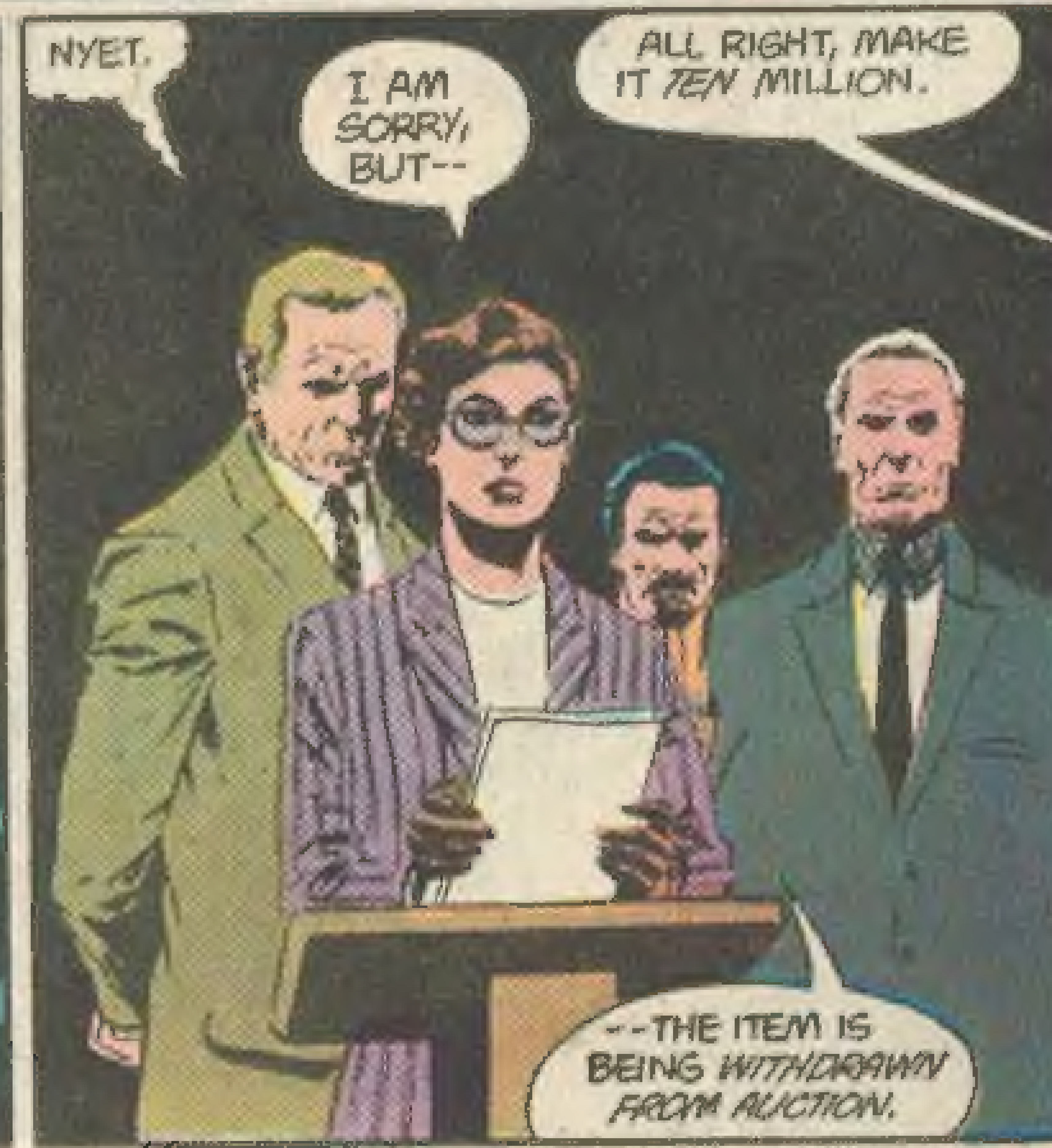
IT SEEMS ENGLISH
TRULY IS THE
INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE...

--IT IS A
MAGNIFICENT
STATUE IN
BRONZE--

--A COSSACK
HORSEMAN
ENTITLED
"THE DARK
RIDER."

TO START,
WE HAVE A
PRELIMINARY
SEALED BID OF
FIVE HUNDRED
THOUSAND.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.





YOUR ACCENT
IS RUSSIAN,
COMRADE.
PERHAPS IF
I TENDERED MY
BID IN A CURRENCY LESS
EMBARRASSING
THAN DOLLARS ..



THE STATUE IS
NO LONGER FOR
SALE--IN ANY
CURRENCY.



VERY
WELL
NO
ALL

YES



YES



THE STATUE IS
NO LONGER FOR
SALE--IN ANY
CURRENCY.



NOT SO FAST, COMRADE.
OUR LINE OF
BUSINESS IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN
ANY OTHER.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO
THAT CAR?

THE CAR IS BEING
STUCK IN THE ROAD
AND THE DRIVERS IN
IT ARE DEAD--

THAT

IN AMERICA, WE LEARN
TO KEEP OUR CAR
ROCK SOLID

THE CAR IS BEING
STUCK IN THE ROAD
AND THE DRIVERS IN
IT ARE DEAD--

THE CAR IS BEING
STUCK IN THE ROAD
AND THE DRIVERS IN
IT ARE DEAD--

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IT ARE DEAD--

THE CAR IS BEING
STUCK IN THE ROAD
AND THE DRIVERS IN
IT ARE DEAD--

THE CAR IS BEING
STUCK IN THE ROAD
AND THE DRIVERS IN
IT ARE DEAD--





CAN'T GO FORWARD AND CAN'T GO BACK--
THE GAUNTLET'S SIMPLY TOO TIGHT!

UMPH!!

TO HAVE
TO GET OUT
OF THIS--



CLEAR
HERE -
QUICKLY!



WHAT
THE--



IT WAS A TRAP--
FROM BOB!

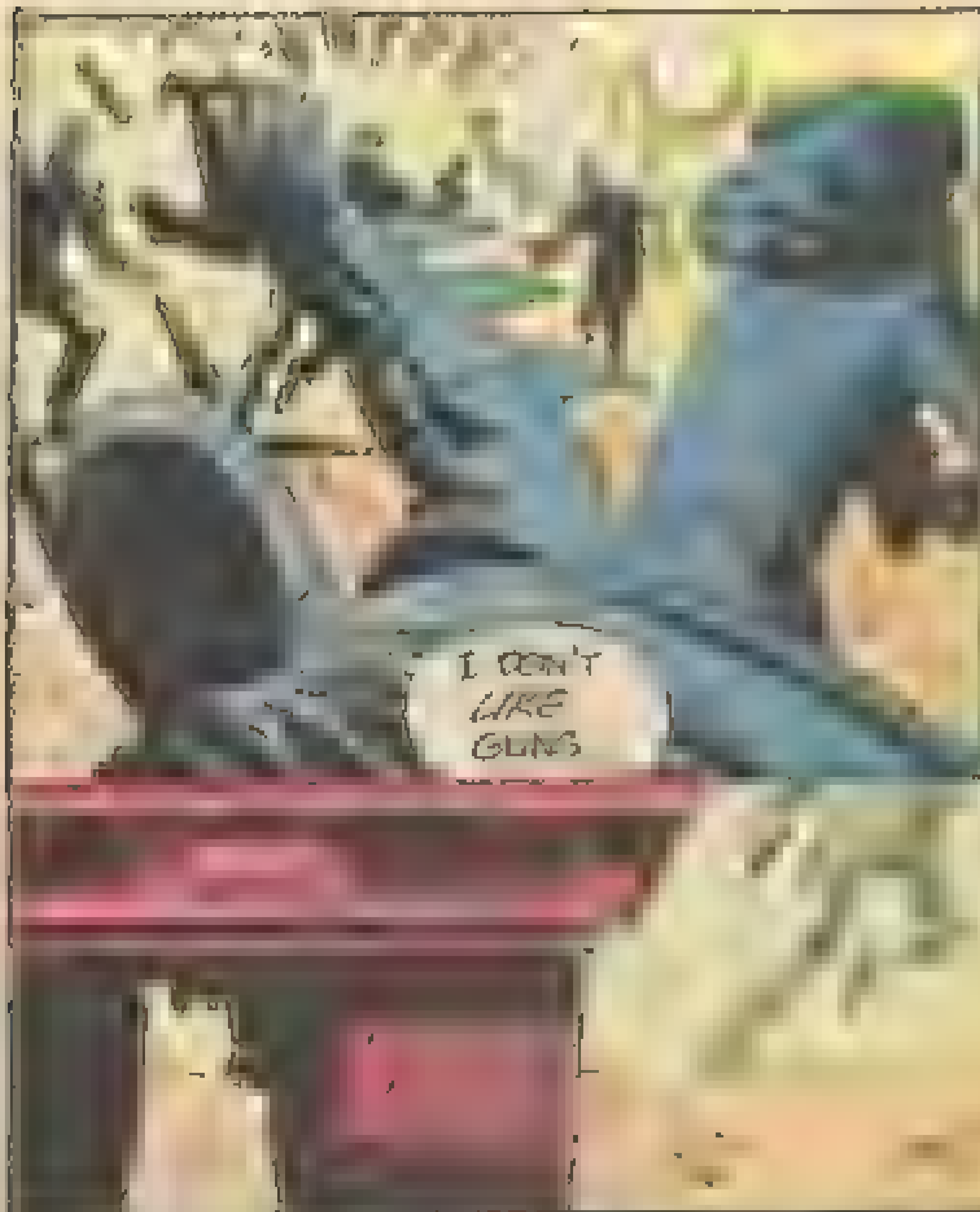
BUT I THOUGHT
YOU

SOLD YOU OUT?
I DID, BUT I HAVE
SINCE HAD A CHANGE
OF HEART--TOO LATE,
UNFORTUNATELY,
FOR ANYTHING
BUT THIS..

AND EVEN I DID NOT
EXPECT A TRAP OF SUCH
BRAVE REVENGE!

NOW TAKE MY
WEAPON AND
COVER ME WHILE
I REACH THAT
MACHINE!

KEEP IT,
COMRADE!



I DON'T
LIKE
GUNS



AND I DON'T
SEE GUNS

WHAT ABOUT
WE STEAL
TECHNOLOGY
AND COME UP WITH
GUNS?

FOR NOW I'LL
STAY FOR THAT
TECHNOLOGY



BY THE WAY, I AM
THE GATMAN.
BUT WHAT IS
YOUR NAME
COMRADE?

YOU MAY CALL ME
CODE-NAME OF JOKER

THEY ARE
THESE ARE
THESE ARE
THESE ARE



DON'T GET ANY
IDEAS, BATMAN!

I FIRED THEM INSTEAD
OF THEM IN THE
REAR - AND ATTEMPTING
TO KILL THEM WOULD
ONLY HAVE GETTER UP
WITH THEM!

THEY ARE
THESE ARE
THESE ARE



ONE OF THE
DEEPEST!

AND FOR THE
SUPERIORS, MY STATUS
IS KNOWN BY THE
A EVEN OTHER
OPERATIVES!

STILL
THINKING
FOR

SAVE IT--I ACTED
FROM NEITHER ALTRUISM
NOR GUILTY CONSCIENCE!

SINCE WE SHARE THE SAME
OBJECTIVE FOR THE MOMENT,
YOU MAY BE OF USE TO ME.

BECAUSE THEY FAILED TO PUT YOU BACK
TOGETHER -- WHICH WOULD NOT SURPRISE ME -- YOU
WOULD ONLY HAVE GOTTEN IN MY WAY AGAIN.

ALL I WANT
IS THE
STATUE.

IT'S A
SIMPLE
MATTER.

STOPPING THE
BLACK RIDER
AND YOU NEED
NOT KNOW HIS
ACTUAL NAME.

HE IS A
FORMER KGB
OPERATIVE
OUT OF
RUSSIA.

THEY
KNOW
ABOUT
HIM.

WE ALWAYS KNEW
HE WAS A RISK,
BUT UNTIL A WEEK
AGO WE DID NOT
KNOW HE WAS
BOTH A RISK
AND A RISK.

THE STATUE
HAD BEEN
IN
RUSSIA
FOR
A
LONG
TIME.

TO GET
THE
STATUE.

KEEP THE
STATUE
SAFE.

HE RETURNED
SMOOTHLY, EFFICIENTLY,
AND WITH BUT ONE
CASUALTY.

THE STATUE
IS
SAFE.

THE STATUE
IS
SAFE.

AND
ABOUT
THE

YOU SURVIVED. BESIDES, YOU'RE
ALSO WORKING FOR THE CIA.

WHEN HE RETURNED
THE STATUE, EVERYTHING
WAS FINE -- AMPLE TIME
TO GET IT TO BONN FOR
THE BLACK MARKET.

THE STATUE WAS
RETURNED ALL ALONG
-- CAPTURED BY
THE KGB.

THE
STATUE

THE STATUE WAS
RETURNED ALL ALONG
-- CAPTURED BY
THE KGB.

THE
STATUE

THE COSSACK HORSEMAN AND EVERYTHING ELSE AT THE AUCTION WAS DECADENT--PRE-REVOLUTIONARY.

THE SOVIET UNION HAS NO NEED FOR SUCH WORKS OF SO-CALLED "ART."

TURN OFF THE ROAD AHEAD

BUT SUCH WORKS ARE VALUABLE, KATIA, AND YOUR GOVERNMENT DOES HAVE NEED FOR DOLLARS AND DEUTSCHE MARKS?

HOW LIKE AN AMERICAN TO SEIZE ON THAT, WE--

NO NEED BE AFRAID, KATIA

WHEN MY GOVERNMENT NEEDS DOLLARS, IT SIMPLY RAISES TAXES AND CUTS FUNDING TO THE ARTS.

WHETHER THE CHILD IS BARTERED AWAY OR STILLBORN MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE NOW GO ON - EVERYTHING WAS FINE UNTIL -- ?

UNTIL WE DISCOVERED THE STATUE HAD BEEN TAMPERED WITH -- THE HORSE'S BELLY GUTTED AND THEN RESEALED.

MEANING SOMEONE WAS OUT THERE TO BE SUCCEEDED?

BUT WHAT?

WE DON'T KNOW-- WE'RE AFRAID TO OPEN IT JUST YET

THE ENTIRE STATUE HAS BEEN ADDITIONALLY COATED WITH LEAD, THEN PAINTED BRONZE TO RESTORE ITS ORGONA APPEARANCE. A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL JOB BUT DETECTED NONETHELESS BY OUR EXPERTS.

INDEED, THEY THEORIZE THAT THE DARK RIDER HIMSELF WAS THE ORIGINAL THIEF--AND THAT HE TOOK IT TO VENICE FOR THE SKILLED TAMPERING.



I CARE NOTHING FOR
LEADERS OR SONS OF
GOD--NOT WHEN
THE REAL ENEMY IS
AMERICA!

WHOM DO YOU THINK *CAUSES*
THE CHAOS IN THE MIDDLE
EAST? AMERICA--A NATION
WITH BUT A FRACTION OF THE
WORLD'S POPULATION
CONTROLLING TWO-THIRDS
OF THE SAME WORLD'S
WEALTH!

A NATION OF CORRUPT
CAPITALISM, PATENT
MURDER AND
SEPTUAGINT



--BUT WHICH
DARES TO BRAND
THE SOVIET UNION
CORRUPT

A NATION CLAIMING IT
WANTS PEACE WHILE
ESCALATING THE ARMS
RACE--EVEN INTO SPACE!

I TELL YOU THE
EAST MUST BE
MUTATED AT ITS
CORE

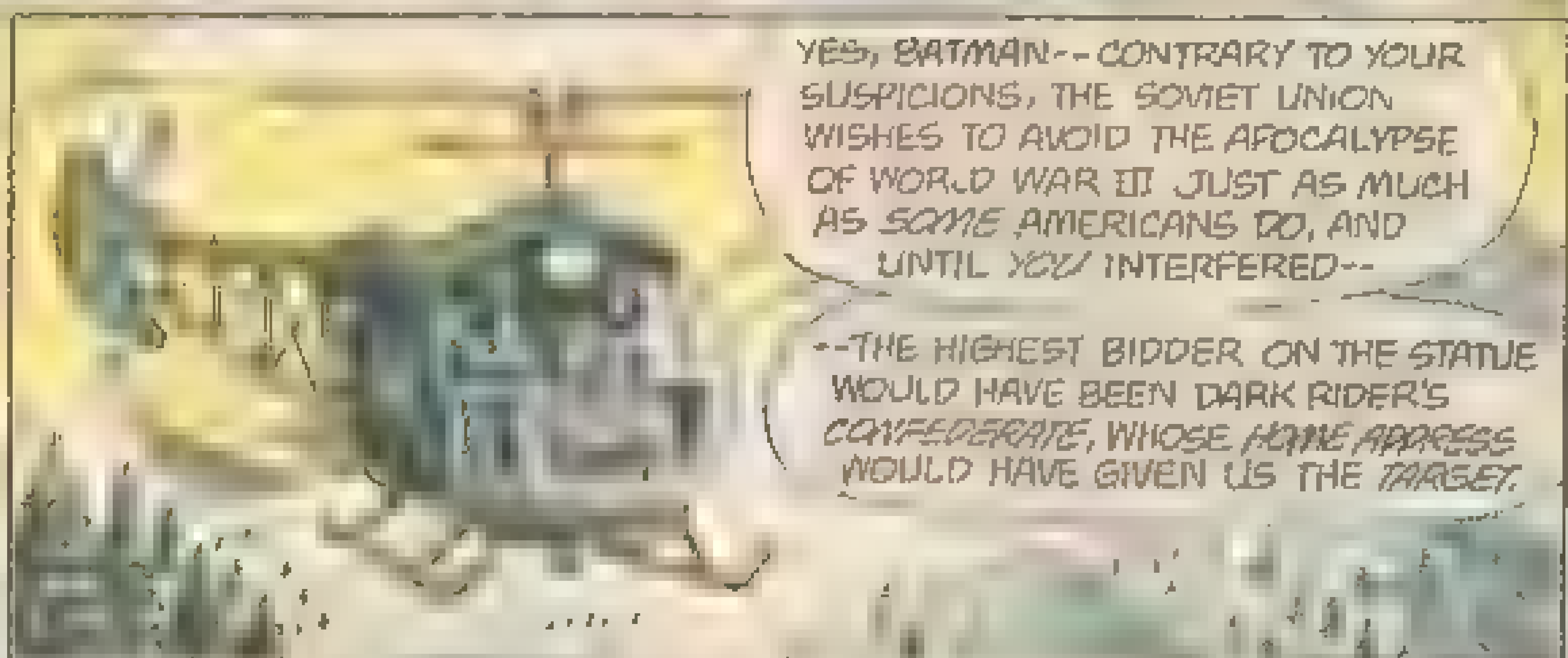
BUT AMERICA
WANTS TO
GO



NOTHING IS TOO BIG FOR ME!

I AM THE DARK RIDER, DO YOU
HEAR?--BRINGING APOCALYPSE
TO A HELPLESS GIANT!

ONE SUCCESS--ONE CITY--
WILL BE PROOF THAT IT CAN BE
DONE AGAIN AND AGAIN--AND IT
WILL BRING AMERICA TO HER
KNEES, HALTING HER RUSH
TOWARD WORLD WAR III!



YES, BATMAN--CONTRARY TO YOUR
SUSPICIONS, THE SOVIET UNION
WISHES TO AVOID THE APOCALYPSE
OF WORLD WAR III JUST AS MUCH
AS SOME AMERICANS DO, AND
UNTIL YOU INTERFERED--

--THE HIGHEST BIDDER ON THE STATUE
WOULD HAVE BEEN DARK RIDER'S
CONFEDERATE, WHOSE HOME ADDRESS
WOULD HAVE GIVEN US THE TARGET.



THEN YOU THINK
THE AUCTION WAS
BEING USED AS A
COVER FOR
SMUGGLING
WHATEVER'S
INSIDE THE
STATUE?

THE HIGH BID, EVEN BEFORE YOURS,
WAS TEN TIMES THE STATUE'S WORTH--
PLACED BY A MYSTERIOUS AND EXTREMELY
WEALTHY MAN WHO HAS NOW RETURNED
TO SWITZERLAND--

--ONE OF A DOZEN DIFFERENT
RESIDENCES HE HAS SCATTERED
VIRTUALLY EVERYWHERE AROUND
THE GLOBE, EXCEPT IN THE
WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

AND PRESUMABLY ONE
OF THOSE RESIDENCES
IS NEAR THE TARGET OF
DARK RIDER'S INTENDED
TERRORISM BRINGING
US TO MY LAST QUESTION
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

THE TARGET
OF DARK RIDER

I NEED TO
KNOW IN MY
DOP



INSTEAD OF RETURNING THE
STATUE TO ~~PROSECUTION~~, WE MADE
A ~~PRIVATE DEAL~~ WITH THE
HIGH BIDDER AND ~~SALES~~
FIRM

THE MYSTERIOUS
AND EXTREMELY WEALTHY
MAN WITH A DOZEN
DIFFERENT FICTITIOUS

THE DARK
RIDER'S ~~ARTIST~~



I DON'T CARE
IF YOUR "PARTNER"
SUCCESSFULLY PURCHASED
THE STATUE! IT WILL
NEVER WORK, NOT EVEN
IN ONE CITY! NOT
EVEN --



UNFORTUNATELY, WE DO NOT
KNOW WHICH RESIDENCE IS THE
FINAL DESTINATION OF HIS
PURCHASE-- AND PRAY THAT WE
ARE NOT TOO LATE TO FIND
OUT, THANKS TO MY DETOUR
IN SAVING ~~OUR~~ ~~THE~~

FROM
RETURNING
WITH

WE'VE BEEN
FOR A
HOUR

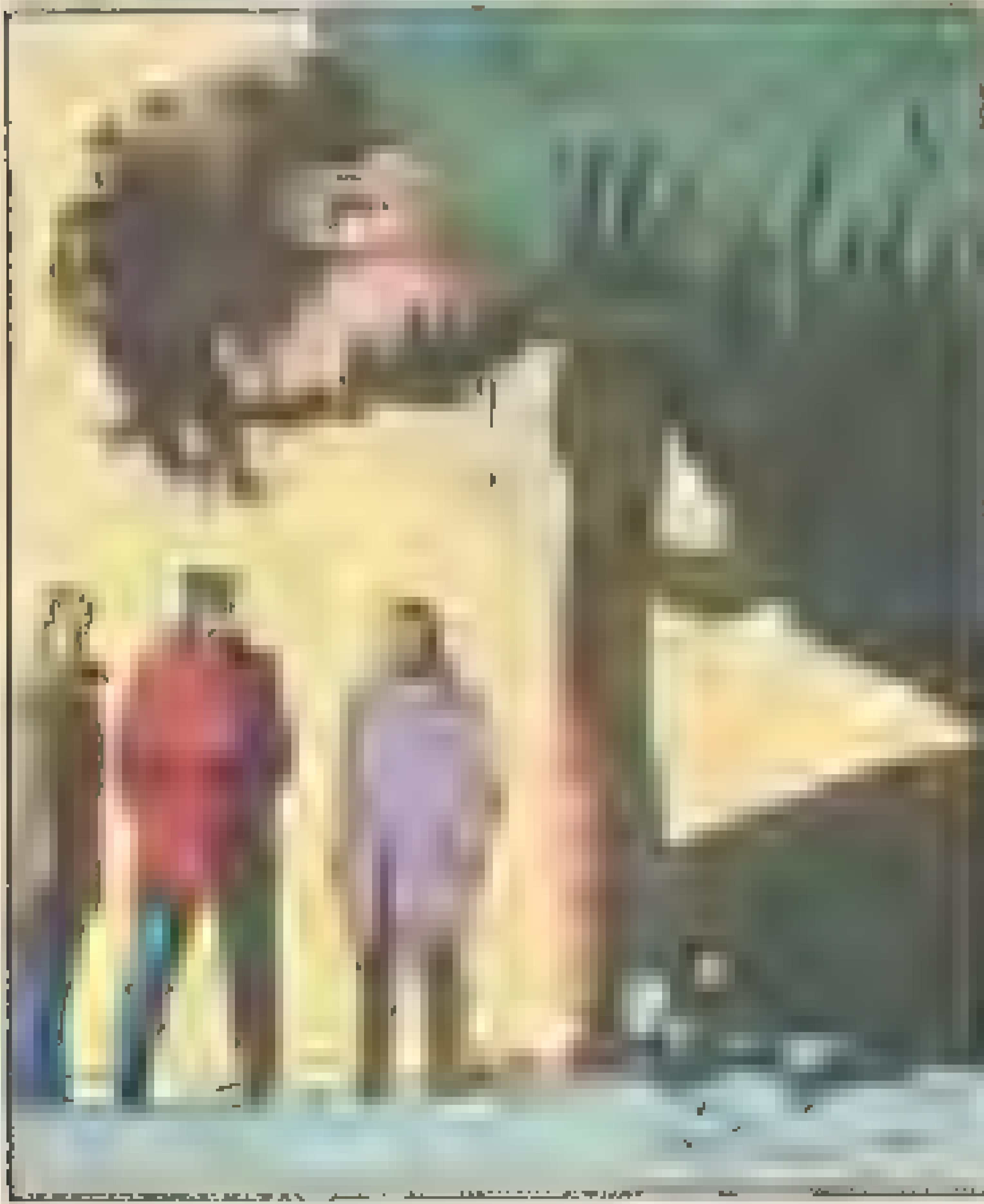


NO-H!



HOW THE
BEST OF
OL

DO NOT WANT
TO SEE THE DARK
SIDE TO THE SKY
ARE YOU WITH
A-H!



WE ARE
WITH THE
FROM THE

COAD

THE HE IS THERE
SO SHE WILL BE THERE
FROM THE RE



TONIGHT.



SWITZERLAND:

THE STATUE'S BUYER IS UP THERE, BATMAN, IN HIS CHALET ATOP THAT MOUNTAIN.

WE WILL--

<WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?>

<HEY-- THAT'S THE BATMAN!>



SOMETHING WRONGS, KATIA?

EXCUSE ME.



WORTH THE RISK?

DA!



MY COLLEAGUES HAVE SPOTTED DARK RIDER NEARBY.

I MUST GO, AND IT IS BEST YOU DO NOT JOIN ME.



WHAT YOU DO HERE IS NOW YOUR OWN BUSINESS...

NOT EVEN A GOOD-BYE, KATIA?

FRANKLY, IT IS A RELIEF TO BE FREE OF THE ATTENTION YOU ATTRACT.



BRIGHT SNOW DOES HAMPER MY CAMOUFLAGE.

I'M BUILT FOR THE NIGHT.



THEN PERHAPS YOU SHOULD--

WH--?!



<WHERE DID HE GO?>

<N-HOW COULD HE SLIP AWAY... SO QUICKLY?>

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

